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ABSTRACT

Project ABRAZO, a Spanish bilingual project in 4 urban schools having over 50% Mexican American composition, operates with the objective of conducting research related to the self-concept of Mexican American students. In connection with ABRAZO, this paper focuses on describing the ABRAZO schools by reporting on the administration of Halpin and Croft's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) to 80 ABRAZO teachers and administrators in an effort to assess the staff's perception of the school climate and to compare the resulting profile to the "norm" developed by Halpin and Croft. (Cf. ED 002 897, the Halpin and Croft study that provides the framework for the present study.) Major conclusions were (1) that the 4 ABRAZO schools fell toward the "open" end of Halpin's continuum of school climate, between "autonomous" and "controlled," (2) that staff characteristics (age, prior teaching experience, etc.) were not significantly related to the various factors of school climate, and (3) that factor analysis of staff responses to the 64-item OCDQ indicated mixed results in terms of replicating the theoretical item clustering developed by Halpin and Croft. Included are 2 figures, 1 table, and 8 references. (BO)

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The Organizational Climate in Schools Having High Concentrations of Mexican-Americans

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Background and Purposes of the Study

Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended, has provided funds for the implementation of bilingual programs in the public schools throughout the country. Here in California the emphasis has been upon bilingual programs in Spanish.

Project ABRAZO is a bilingual project operating in Santa Clara County with the objective of conducting research related to the self-concept of Mexican-American students and strategies which might be employed to enhance self-esteem.

In connection with this research effort, extensive data were compiled to accurately describe the children in the four ABRAZO schools. Additionally, efforts were made to assess school related variables. One aspect of describing the ABRAZO schools was the administration of Halpin and Croft's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) to 80 teachers and administrators.

The focus of this study was in three areas: (1) to describe the organizational climate in urban schools having high concentrations (more than 50%) of Mexican-American children and compare the profile to the norm profile developed by Halpin and Croft, (2) to relate staff characteristics of age, prior teaching experience, years of prior experience at the present school, and highest education level to the eight dimensions of the OCDQ, and (3) to conduct a principal components factor analysis of the responses with a view to replicating the theoretical item clustering developed by Halpin and Croft.

INSTRUMENTATION

Halpin and Croft's (1963) Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) was the instrument used to assess the staff's perception of the school climate. Since this standardized instrument has had widespread use it enables the resulting profile to be interpreted against a "norm" profile which was developed by Halpin and Croft using 71 elementary schools chosen from six different regions of the United States. The norm analysis is based upon the responses of 1151 teachers and administrators to a set of 64 Likert-type items.

The OCDQ is a 64-item instrument consisting of eight subtests delineated by factor-analytic methods. The climate, or organizational "personality," is assessed by questions related to characteristics of the faculty group and to characteristics of the principal as a leader.

The eight characteristics of school climate are operationally defined by Halpin and Croft as follows:

Teacher's Behavior

1. Disengagement . . . refers to the teachers' tendency to be "not with it." This dimension describes a group which is "going through the motions," a group that is "not in gear" with respect to the task at hand. It corresponds to the more general concept of anomie as first described by Durkheim. In short, this subtest focuses upon the teachers' behavior in a task-oriented situation.

2. Hinderance . . . refers to the teachers' feeling that the principal burdens them with routine duties, committee demands, and other requirements which the teachers construe as unnecessary busy-work. The teachers perceive that the principal is hindering rather than facilitating their work.

3. Esprit . . . refers to "morale." The teachers feel that their social needs are being satisfied. and that they are, at the same time, enjoying a sense of accomplishment in their job.

4. Intimacy . . . refers to the teachers' enjoyment of friendly social relations with each other. This dimension describes a social-needs satisfaction which is not necessarily associated with task-accomplishment.

Principal's Behavior

5. Aloofness . . . refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized as formal and impersonal. He "goes by the book" and prefers to be guided by rules and policies rather than to deal with the teachers in an informal, face-to-face situation. His behavior, in brief, is universalistic rather than particularistic; nomothetic rather than idiosyncratic. To maintain this style, he keeps himself-at least, "emotionally"-at a distance from his staff.

6. Production Emphasis . . . refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized by close supervision of the staff. He is highly directive, and plays the role of a "straw boss." His communication tends to go in only one direction, and he is not sensitive to feedback from the staff.

7. Thrust . . . refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized by his evident effort in trying to "move the organization." "Thrust" behavior is marked not by close supervision, but by the principal's attempt to motivate the teachers through the example which he personally sets. Apparently, because he does not ask the teachers to give of themselves any more than he willingly gives of himself, his behavior, though starkly task-oriented, is nonetheless viewed favorably by the teachers.

8. Consideration . . . refers to behavior by the principal which is characterized by an inclination to treat the teachers "humanly," to try to do a little something extra for them in human terms.

Combinations of levels with respect to the above eight characteristics produce a profile of school climate. Six climate types were identified from profile analysis:

1) Open Climate
2) Autonomous Climate
3) Controlled Climate
4) Familiar Climate
5) Paternal Climate
6) Closed Climate

A complete description of these climates may be found in Halpin and Croft (1963). Figure 1 compares the profiles of the Open and Closed Climates.

Results

A. Description of the Organizational Climate

Table 1 summarizes the ABRAZO schools' means and standard deviations on the eight factors of school climate. The table also includes the same values for the 71 school sample from the Halpin and Croft study. The schools in this study scored dramatically lower in four factor areas: hinderance, intimacy, production emphasis, and consideration. Other differences exist but not as dramatic as the four cited. Figure 2 graphs the profiles of Halpin and Croft's norm schools and the ABRAZO schools.

Comparison of the ABRAZO profile with the profiles in Figure 1 indicated that the ABRAZO profile was similar to that of the open school.

ABRAZO schools have the following general characteristics with respect to the eight climate factors.

1) High disengagement
2) Low hinderance
3) High esprit
4) Average intimacy
5) Above average aloofness
6) Average production
7) High thrust
8) Low consideration

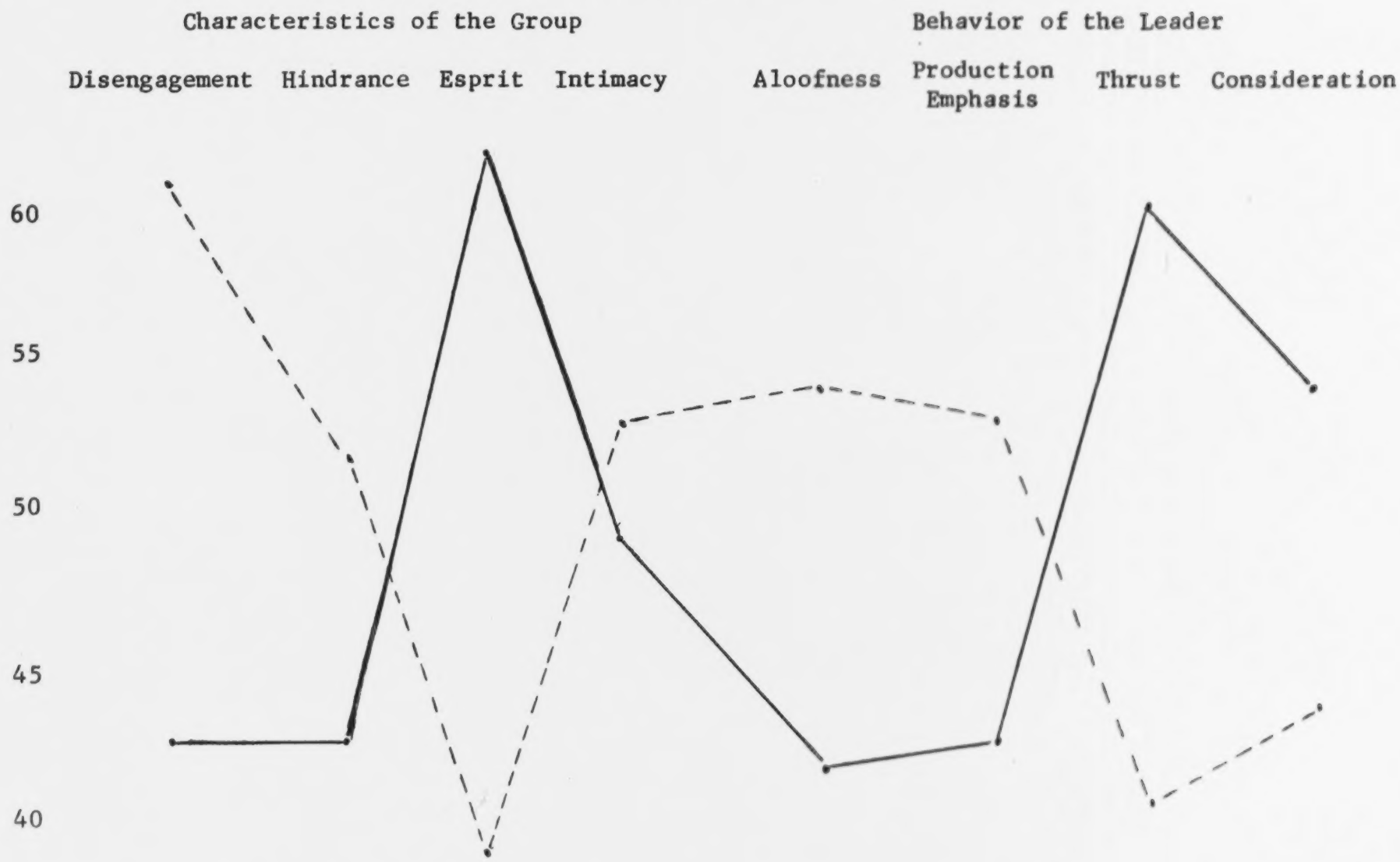
A profile such as this is classified (Halpin and Croft, 1963) between the autonomous and controlled climate.

1) The Autonomous climate is described as one in which leadership acts emerge primarily from the group. The leader exerts little control over the group members; high Esprit results primarily from social-needs satisfaction. Satisfaction from task achievement is also present, but to a lesser degree.

2) The Controlled climate is characterized best as impersonal and highly task-oriented. The group's behavior is directed primarily toward task accomplishment, while relatively little attention is given to behavior oriented to social-needs satisfaction. Espirit is fairly high, but it reflects achievement at some expense to social-needs

Figure 1

COMPARISON OF AN <u>OPEN</u>[a] AND A <u>CLOSED</u> ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE ON THE EIGHT SUBTESTS OF THE <u>ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE</u> (FORM IV)



[a]The <u>Open</u> Climate is represented by the solid line; the <u>Closed</u> Climate, by the dotted line.

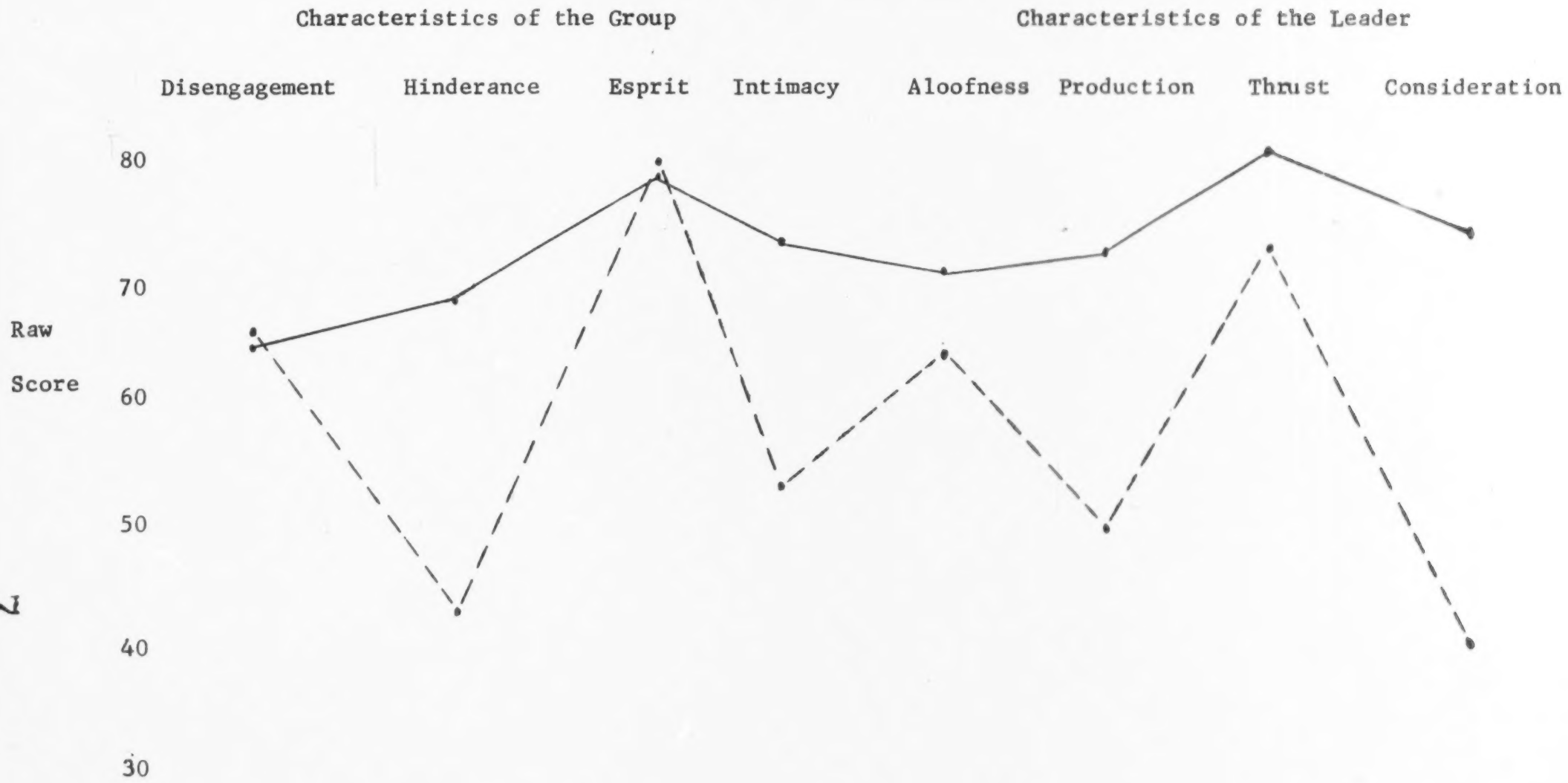
TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON THE
EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE FOR
THE STUDY SCHOOLS AND HALPIN AND CROFT'S NORM SCHOOLS

	Mexican-American Schools		Halpin-Croft Schools	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Disengagement	66.18	5.84	65.9	4.36
Hinderance	44.89	3.16	69.9	5.83
Esprit	80.98	5.51	80.7	5.15
Intimacy	52.23	4.73	72.6	5.14
Aloofness	66.14	4.80	71.5	3.98
Production	50.33	2.94	72.2	5.27
Thrust	72.35	6.27	81.8	6.14
Consideration	43.44	4.65	72.2	6.05

Figure 2

COMPARISON OF HALPIN AND CROFT'S ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE NORM PROFILE
AND THE PROFILE OF SCHOOLS HAVING HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS



Halpin Profile = Solid line
Abrazo Profile = Broken line

satisfaction. This climate lacks openness, or "authenticity" of behavior, because the group is disproportionately preoccupied with task achievement.

B. Relation of Staff Characteristics to Organizational Climate

Many studies, Ross (1958), Carlson (1965), Richland (1965), Rogers (1965), Carnie (1966), Lawrence (1967), have been conducted which relate school and staff characteristics to measures of organizational climate and/or innovativeness. Much of the research is conflicting regarding their effect.

In a recent study, Johnson and Marcum (1969) conducted in western schools, they found that Halpin and Croft's OCDQ was able to differentiate between innovative and non-innovative schools. Highly innovative schools had open climates. Additionally, the more innovative schools spent more per child, had younger staff, had staff remain a fewer number of years, and were larger schools. No causal inferences were made.

Staff characteristics of age, prior teaching experience, years of prior experience at the present school, and highest education level were correlated with the eight factors of school climate.

No significant relationships were found.

C. Factor Analysis Results

Halpin and Croft developed their eight factor scores for the OCDQ using item analysis and factor analytic methods. One of the purposes of this study was to factor analyze the responses of the staff in ABRAZO schools with a view to comparing the factor loadings with those of Halpin and Croft.

A principal components factor analysis was conducted forcing eight factors to be rotated. The eight factor extraction accounted for only 57 percent of the variance. Item communalities ranged from 22 percent to 78 percent. Indication was that 16 factors would be necessary to explain 75 percent of the variance.

Items reflecting Esprit, Consideration, Hinderance, Thrust, and Intimacy, as suggested by Halpin and Croft, did load on the designated factor. The pattern of factor loadings for Aloofness, Disengagement and Production Thrust did not generally match the pattern hypothesized by Halpin and Croft.

Summary and Conclusions

The assessment of the organizational climate of four urban schools serving populations of more than 50% Mexican-American indicated that the climate was toward the "open" end of Halpin's continuum falling between the autonomous and controlled climates. The profile of these schools was markedly lower than Halpin's norm in the areas of Hinderance, Intimacy, production, and Consideration.

Staff characteristics of age, prior teaching experience, years of prior experience at the present school, and highest education level were not significantly related to the various factors of school climate.

Factor analysis of the staff responses to the 64-item OCDQ indicated mixed results in terms of an eight-factor explanation. The factor loadings for items hypothesized to indicate esprit, consideration, hinderance, thrust, and intimacy were consistent with Halpin's data. This was not the case for the factors of aloofness, disengagement and production thrust. The eight-factor explanation accounted for 57% of the variance.

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